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## Siegal solos on new album

Experiment in White  
Janis Siegal  
Atlantic

By Ben Miller

Just imagine being the lead singer for one of the most well-known and respected vocal jazz quartets around. The life of concert tours, raking in bucks from album sales and winning Grammy awards is somehow unfulfilling. So, naturally, you make a solo album (with the blessing of the group, of course) and attempt to establish a solo career.

What's the problem? Unfortunately, the resulting album contains everything imaginable — from country-pop to New York jazz. It really doesn't work, but never fear, there's still the group.

This scenario might



belong to Janis Siegal. For years she helped the Manhattan Transfer bebop its way into our hearts. But without Cheryl, Alan and

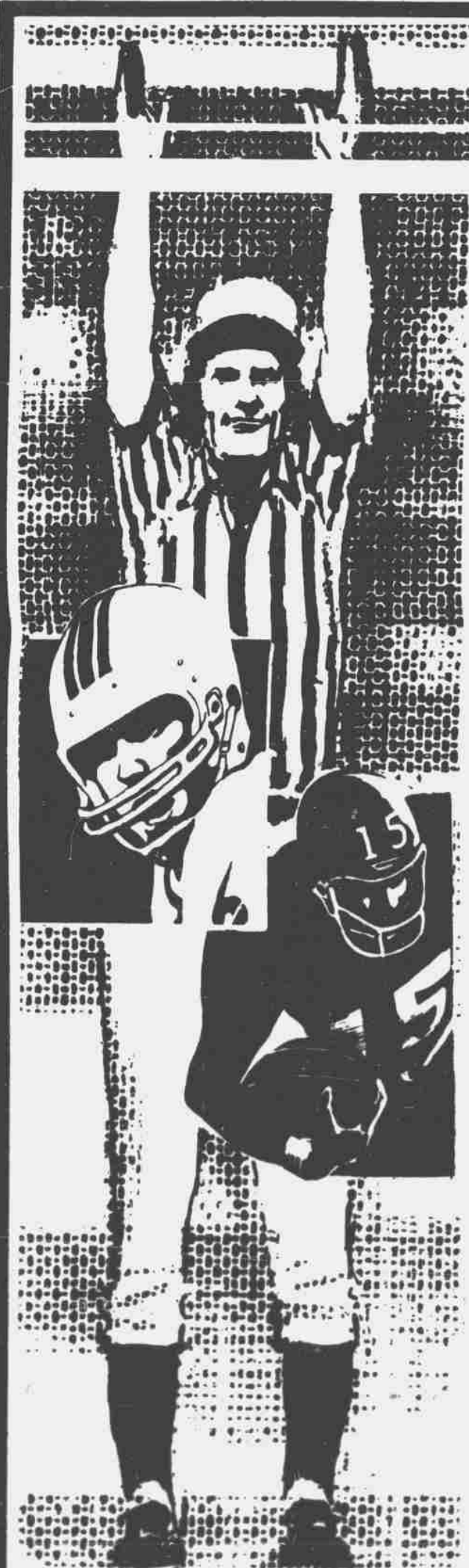
Tim, she's simply a frustrated soloist who tries to cover every musical taste.

Experiment in White begins with a mediocre rendition of Leon Russell's "Back to the Islands." It is followed by "All the Love in the World," a song that might sound more at home in Bernie's Lounge in Kokomo, Indiana, or an office building's elevator. "Lovin' Eyes" is not only poorly written, it also is performed with little to no feeling for the lyrics. "Hammer and Nails" is an up-tempo oldie that is a bit misplaced on this album, yet does show Janis' versatility.

The second half of the LP is more the Janis we're all accustomed to. She sings four Transfer-like melodies that bring her back to her best vocal style. "How High the Moon" is a '40s tune that exemplifies Janis' love of tight harmonies and the simpler background music reminiscent of the Andrews Sisters. "Don't Get Scared," a quick scat-like duet with Jon Hendricks, also works well for Siegal and shows her jazz roots.

"Guess Who I Saw Today" is the epitome of Siegal's vocal style. In her most glowing performance of the album, she shows a depth and soul that comes so naturally to her and a versatility that is so rare on this album. "Jackie" is another scat solo that again shows the talent this woman possesses.

Experiment in White is full of contradictions. Siegal does some of her best work on this album, then nearly ruins it with bad renditions of old songs. Her vocal style and quality are comparable to the likes of Judy Garland or Billie Holiday. But with the ludicrous material she has chosen, or someone has chosen for her, she is just another artist trying to break out of a mold created by her association with the Manhattan Transfer. For this Transfer fanatic, Janis Siegal's album was a disappointment. I sincerely hope she continues to pour her talents into the jazz medium that first brought her attention.



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